

REVIEWS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS. By Douglas McAlpine, M.D., F.R.C.P., Nigel D. Compston, M.A., M.D., and Charles R. Lumsden, M.D. (Pp. viii + 304; plates 32. 35s.) Edinburgh and London: E. and S. Livingstone Ltd., 1955.

Thus, I believe, is the first book to be published in Great Britain on multiple or disseminated sclerosis, the topic being one upon which the senior author, Dr. McAlpine, is particularly well qualified to write. He has done so in collaboration with a general physician (Dr. Compston—known for his work on the natural history of the disease), and a pathologist (Dr. Lumsden—holder of the Henry Head Fellowship of the Royal Society of London since 1951).

The authors are to be congratulated on the results, for it cannot have been easy for them to decide on the best way to present an account of such a very common disease, especially as the cause being still unknown, the subject bristles with so many unsolved problems. They have succeeded, however, in presenting a well-balanced picture. Instead of selecting certain aspects for speculation, they have devoted themselves to the important task of assembling and reviewing the present-day state of knowledge, both clinically and pathologically; only so far as is permissible on the evidence have they allowed themselves to review cautiously such conclusions as may be drawn from the available sources of information.

A good list of references to the work of other authors is given at the end of each chapter. To anyone about to undertake original work in this field, the book should be invaluable as an authoritative work of reference. The chapters dealing with pathology and with the relationship of multiple sclerosis to the demyelinating diseases are well illustrated by a series of microphotographs and plates.

The book should have an appeal and is recommended to general practitioners who are concerned more with differential diagnosis, management and prognosis. There is a chapter on treatment in which the necessity for adopting a more positive attitude is stressed. Illustrative accounts are given throughout of cases drawn from personal experience and based on the series of 1,072 patients with multiple sclerosis seen in the Department for Nervous Diseases of the Middlesex Hospital between the years 1930-1952.

R. S. A.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE POLIOMYELITIS. By C. P. Stott, S.R.N., C.M.B. (Part 1), and M. Fischer-Williams, M.R.C.P.(Ed.). (Pp. xii + 99; figs. 43. 12s. 6d.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone, 1955.

THIS little book is primarily intended for those concerned with the care of patients in all stages of poliomyelitis. The authors are obviously greatly experienced in the handling of these types of patients and much of their excellent advice is the product of intimate acquaintance with the disease.

Chapters 9 and 10 on bulbar paralysis and its care are excellent for doctor or nurse. There is a generous tribute to Sister Kenny in the chapter on hot packs. This chapter gives a fair assessment of the value and limitations of this treatment.

There is a very moving account of her experiences during four months in a cabinet respirator by a patient already some months pregnant when poliomyelitis afflicted her.

The isolation technique and appendix of equipment are idealistic. There is a useful appendix of movements and exercises.

On page 3 the word "antitoxin" could better read "prophylactic," and there appear several variants of "Magill." The illustrations, style, and production are first class.

The book is warmly commended to the notice of consultants, practitioners, and nurses as a very well presented adequate summary of the care of poliomyelitis patients.

F. F. K.